

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 221230Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USINT BAGHDAD

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ABU DHABI PASS DUBAI
ATHENS FOR RTDO
JIDDA PASS RIYADH

E.O. 11652: N/A
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TAGS: BTRA, QA
SUBJECT: QATARI PARTICIPATION IN ARAB CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
MISSION TO U.S.

REF: BEIRUT 848, BEIRUT 0763 (BOTH NOTAL)

1. COMMERCIAL OFFICER DISCUSSED MISSION WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL OF

QATAR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE KAMAL SALEH MORNING OF 21 FEBRUARY. ACCORDING TO SALEH, QATARI "OFFICIAL DELEGATION" (SPONSORED BY GOQ) WILL CONSIST OF TWO MEMBERS, ONE FROM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND OTHER FROM MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMY. (IN FACT, CHAMBER IS PART OF MINISTRY, BUT THE OFFICES FUNCTION INDEPENDENTLY). IN ADDITION TO OFFICIAL DELEGATES, SALEH EXPECTS TO RECRUIT LOCAL BUSINESSMEN TO ACCOMPANY MISSION AT OWN EXPENSE. HE SAYS HE HAS THREE (UN-NAMED) BUSINESSMEN ALREADY SIGNED UP TO GO.

2. ACCORDING TO SALEH, THE DELEGATION COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF 22 STATES WILL VISIT FIVE U.S. CITIES--NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, D.C. HOUSTON, SAN FRANCISCO, AND CHICAGO ON FIFTEEN DAY TOUR STARTING APRIL 16. STAGING POINT WILL BE AMMAN WITH CHARTER FLIGHT GOING TO NEW YORK.

3. SALEH INDICATED THAT MISSION WILL BE SEEKING EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION IN FIVE BASIC AREAS: COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURE, FINANCE AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, LEGAL QUESTIONS HAVING TO DO WITH TRADE; THE BOYCOTT AND TAXES AS THEY AFFECT AMERICAN FIRMS OPERATING IN ARAB COUNTRIES. WHEN ASKED ABOUT WHETHER THERE WOULD BE A POLITICAL ASPECT OR POLITICAL STATEMENTS, SALEH SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED IN AMMAN CONFERENCE (FEB. 4-6, 1978) THAT POLITICAL ASPECT WOULD BE PLAYED DOWN. SALEH SAID HE "DID NOT EXPECT RADICALS TO MAKE TROUBLE" DURING TRIP. THE AMMAN CONFERENCE, HE SAID, HAD DECIDED THAT THE BEST STRATEGY WAS TO TREAT MISSION PURELY AS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMERCIAL MISSION AND THAT THIS STRATEGY WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF SHOWING AMERICAN BUSINESS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC THAT THE U.S. IMAGE OF THE ARAB TERRORIST IS THE WRONG IMAGE TO APPLY TO ARABS.

4. SALEH, HIMSELF, MAY HEAD QATARI DELEGATION. HE IS A QATARIZED PALESTINIAN AND PROBABLY THE MOST ELOQUENT MEMBER OF THE LOCAL PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY. ALTHOUGH BY NO MEANS A SPOKESMAN FOR THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY, HE REFLECTS THE ATTITUDES OF THE COMMUNITY. HE FINDS PRESENT U.S. POLICY ENCOURAGING ("FOR A CHANGE") AND IS PARTICULARLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE MORALITY OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION. ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT DESCRIBE HIMSELF AS PRO-AMERICAN, HE SEES "ARAB SALVATION AT THE SIDE OF AMERICA." HE WILL BE SENDING HIS OLDEST SON TO UNIVERSITY IN THE U.S. IN SEPTEMBER.

KILLGORE

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